

DARIEN SOCIAL SERVICES COMMISSSION

Minutes of the Special Meeting of September 7, 2012

Present: Olive Hauser, Nancy Herling, Ali Ramsteck, Inta Adams, Melisse Reardon, Polly Lowman, Holly Hawes, Rachael Martin, Beverly Kelsey.

Minutes: Minutes of the June 8, 2012 meeting were approved as presented.

Agenda Items Covered:

1. **Back to School Program:** There was a 38% increase in children participating in the Back to School Program this year over last. A total of 86 packs, supplies and Payless shoe cards, were given away this year, up from 62 last year. Staples and Costco donated supplies. The staff and Polly Lowman will hold a small follow up meeting to review the program and make recommendations for next year.
2. **Renters Program:** The Rebate Program, that provides rent subsidies for qualified elderly living in town is off to a slow start. It ends in mid-September. We expect to serve 36 – 38 household units versus 34 last year.
3. **Energy Assistance:** Last year there was a significant decrease in the money amount of grants from the State. It was somewhat offset by the mild winter. Folks on electric heat were hit hardest. New computer software is being installed to process applications and DSSC staff is being trained on it. Letters are going out to last year's recipients and new clients to remind them of the need to re-apply for this year.
4. **Christmas Program:** We expect a 20 % increase in demand for this program this year that would take us to 100 families. An artificial tree is needed. Discussion took place about the possible locations we could place gift trees as well as groups that might like to sponsor them.
5. **Home Goods Closet:** The Home Goods Closet is almost empty. We have given out more goods in the last month than in the last quarter. We discussed ways to more effectively advertise this need as well as the services DSS provides to the community. It was felt that there is not enough awareness in town of what we do. Rachael Martin agreed to work on some articles for the local papers.
6. **Gifts and Donation Funds:** The Fund is down to \$200. This account came about from revenues received from production teams filming movies in town. Over the years we have had many smaller donations as well.

7. **Salvation Army Issues:** The Salvation Army is experiencing serious financial difficulty and donations are down significantly. This may have an impact on the funds we receive from them annually, currently averaging around \$7,000. It was agreed that we need to advertise more effectively the fact that Darien receives 90% of the funds donated to the local kettle during the holiday season.

Respectively Submitted:

Beverly Kelsey

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Secretary